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LETTER DATED 14 MAY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, issued on 14 May 1999 (see annex). The statement, made on the occasion of the meeting held between the Special Envoy of President Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and Chairman of the Organization of African Unity High-Level Delegation, Minister for Foreign Affairs Youssouf Ouedraogo, and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, reiterates the consistent position of Ethiopia on the crisis.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia
issued on 14 May 1999

The Special Envoy of President Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso, Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Chairman of the OAU High-Level Delegation, Minister for Foreign Affairs Youssouf Ouedraogo, accompanied by representatives of the OAU Secretariat, met yesterday, 13 May 1999, with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi. The delegation also met earlier with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Seyoum Mesfin.

Foreign Minister Ouedraogo, who was also carrying a message from President Compaore to Prime Minister Meles, conducted extensive discussions and exchanged views with both Prime Minister Meles and Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin.

After expressing his appreciation to OAU, the High-Level Delegation and to the Current Chairman of OAU for all the efforts that they have made and continue to make for the peaceful resolution of the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Prime Minister Meles reiterated the consistently held position of Ethiopia on the crisis as follows:

1. The OAU Framework Agreement is a solid and well crafted document which rests on provisions of the Charter of OAU, principles of international law and on full realization of the aspiration of the African people to free the continent of conflicts. It is the commitment to these ideals which underpins the OAU peace plan.
2. The substantive provisions of the peace plan and the proposals contained therein, which focus on procedural matters designed to ensure the peaceful resolution of border dispute, are all informed by OAU's commitment to its Charter principles and to principles of international law and by OAU's adherence to principles of peaceful and friendly relations among African States.
3. The OAU Framework Agreement is a comprehensive peace package whose various elements form an integral whole, none of which can be ignored, rejected or put aside without undermining the whole structure. Accordingly, the claim that one has accepted the OAU peace plan, as Eritrea does, while not willing to be committed to carrying out the key element of the peace plan, in this instance withdrawal from occupied Ethiopian territories, cannot be taken seriously and is in effect a rejection of the peace plan, notwithstanding the incessant Eritrean claim to the contrary.
4. Eritrea's position has been consistent right from the very onset of its aggression against Ethiopia. In the pre-February 1999 period and prior to its defeat in Badme, Eritrea, in effect, had refused to accept the OAU peace plan. After it was forced to vacate Badme, it began to claim that it had accepted the Framework; by thus changing tactics Eritrea proceeded to undermine the spirit of the OAU peace

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plan by playing with the language contained in the document and by making it sound as though the provisions of the peace plan are open to different interpretations. Eritrea therefore, while publicly expressing its commitment to peace, continues to be an obstacle to peace and continues to reject the OAU peace plan, while at the same time claiming to be bound by it.

5. The OAU peace plan leaves no room for conflicting interpretations and whatever problems there are in this regard are artificial and the result of a deliberately created confusion and a smokescreen designed to prevent its implementation.
6. OAU has called for withdrawal of Eritrean troops from all occupied Ethiopian territories and has also called for a ceasefire as well as for other steps to promote the peaceful resolution of the crisis. All these steps form an integral whole and are linked, and none can be torn apart from the others and be considered in isolation without destroying the very fabric of the peace plan and its foundation.
7. Ethiopia has always been committed to the spirit and letter of the Framework Agreement and has accepted the peace plan in its totality. It has shown all the necessary flexibility in this regard without, however, compromising on principles.
8. Ethiopia's insistence that Eritrea's aggression cannot and should not be rewarded is consistent with OAU Charter principles, principles of international law and the aspiration of Africa for a conflict-free continent. This is also the foundation upon which the OAU peace plan rests.
9. The OAU peace plan calls on Eritrea to withdraw, not only from Badme, from which it was expelled forcefully after refusing to do so for nine months, but from all Ethiopian territories it is occupying. Eritrea now says that it has "withdrawn" from Badme and has thus fulfilled its obligation under the OAU peace plan and should not, therefore, be asked to pull out from other occupied Ethiopian territories. Neither principles of international law nor the Framework Agreement support this Eritrean position.
10. There can, therefore, be no doubt that Eritrea continues to be an obstacle to peace and to the implementation of the OAU peace plan.
11. The bottom line for Ethiopia, a position which is in full conformity with the provisions of the OAU Framework Agreement, is that Eritrea should and must withdraw from all occupied Ethiopian territories and that the Ethiopian administrations forcefully uprooted should be restored so that the implementation of the peace plan can proceed.
12. OAU has taken a principled position in this regard. It has submitted a document for peace which the Organization should take pride in. It has not allowed itself to be sidetracked by the confusion deliberately created by Eritrea. If others also join OAU in this effort, it might

be possible, even at this late hour, to ensure the peaceful resolution of the crisis. Eritrea needs to be told that the new round of prevarication it has embarked upon will not and cannot succeed.

Eritrea has lately come up with a new gimmick. It argues that the first step should be the signing by the two parties of the peace plan as if Ethiopia has not long ago, in effect, done so when its Prime Minister, in a letter sealed and delivered on 12 November 1998, committed Ethiopia to the Framework Agreement. For whatever it's worth, Eritrea also did likewise on 27 February 1999. Affixing one's signature to a document that one has not embraced fully makes little sense. Before formality should come substance and the substance revolves around whether or not Eritrea is prepared to commit itself to withdrawal from Ethiopian territories that it is still occupying by force.
